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RNZ: Pack including rapid antigen tests given to incoming travellers from Monday - Ardern

RNZ, 22 February 2022

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern says travellers coming into Auckland Airport will be issued with a pack including three rapid antigen tests, information and advice when the border reopens to some on Monday.

The border reopening plan's first stage - allowing vaccinated New Zealanders and certain other eligible travellers to arrive from Australia without entering managed isolation and quarantine (MIQ) - begins at 11.59pm this Sunday, 27 February.

The second step - opening with the same criteria for travel from the rest of the world as well as working-holiday visas and skilled workers earning 1.5x the median wage - is set for two weeks later, on 13 March.

Ardern has this afternoon been touring Auckland Airport, and been briefed on readiness for the change.

She says the beginning of our reconnection plan is "extremely exciting".

Travellers coming into New Zealand will find a familiar airport welcome but with some added extras "that will help us ensure that we're doing everything to keep them safe and the community safe as well", she says.

She says after they have collected their bags, they will be issued with a pack including three rapid antigen tests, information and advice.

She says the system is expected to change over time, however, and expert advice on whether self-isolation times can be further reduced is being sought.

Ardern says the government knows that self-isolation has a knock-on effect for many industries, so as much advance warning as possible needs to be given. She says the government also needs to consider the safety of New Zealanders during a pandemic at the same time.

She says the government has prioritised New Zealanders for being able to self-isolate over tourists and other foreign travellers because they are more likely to stay long term, and self-isolation is less likely to present as much of a barrier to them.

It's important that people welcomed into New Zealand should feel safe and free to move, and too many cases being seeded into the community from the border would mean tourists not having that experience, she says.

"We do need to get that balance right."

She says once we come through the Omicron outbreak we'll have the opportunity to open up more widely.

She yesterday gave further assurances that restrictions within New Zealand would begin easing "well beyond" the Omicron outbreak's peak, some three to six weeks away.

The government laid out the rules for self-isolating travellers last week, and criteria for allowing people to leave MIQ early were loosened.

Under the government's plan, unvaccinated travellers would still be required to go into MIQ and some facilities will continue to house those unable to isolate at home, but the Defence Force would no longer secure the facilities.

Ardern has also signalled the government may no longer require self-isolation for vaccinated travellers in the "not too distant" future.

Move to phase three expected 'fairly shortly'

Ardern says we're seeing increased Covid-19 case numbers and hospitalisations, but the hospitalisation rate is about 1 percent to 1.5 percent.

"But the scale is large, and it will grow."

From Thursday, GPs will be using rapid antigen tests where they may previously have used PCR testing.

However, Ardern says if you have not been told to get a test, have no symptoms and are not a contact, you should not go seek a test.

"They are causing long lines," she says.

"One of the major issues still continues to be people who are worried coming to be tested. I understand your anxiety, but please if you are not symptomatic or you are not a contact who needs to be tested, please do not attend our testing stations. It is standing in the way of people who need to be tested."

She says there is flexibility in the system for teachers to return to school if they have been a contact but are not symptomatic, via rapid antigen testing and the test to return to work scheme.

A move to phase three is expected "fairly shortly". That means more frequent use of rapid antigen testing and a further narrowing of the definition of who a contact is, she says.

[Stuff: New Zealand occupation fundraising website registered in Canada](#)

Stuff.co.nz, Tom Hunt, Ben Strang and Andrea Vance, February 22 2022

Police walking in formation up Molesworth St after barricades were set up to contain the protest.

Correction: An earlier version of this story said that a fundraising website for the New Zealand occupation was linked to the Canadian "freedom convoy" and a website selling merchandise for that protest. This was based on the registration of the websites' domains but this was incorrect. This story has been updated to remove the link between the two protests. We regret the error. (Amended 11.05am, February 22, 2022)

The massive operation to feed, power, and cover the occupation of Parliament is partly funded by a website registered in Toronto, Canada.

Protesters in Wellington have confirmed they had been told that any parking tickets could be taken to the occupation information tent, and they would be paid.

While it is not clear where all the money behind the protest has come from, the occupation's fundraising page on Monday had individual donations in the hundreds or, in at least one case, \$1000. By Monday evening, more than \$30,000 had been raised.

"Donations are currently being used to fund infrastructure and equipment for the ground team, including the food crew. Examples are kitchen items, generators, marquees, tarpaulins, tools etc," the fundraising site says.

The New Zealand protest website was first registered on Tuesday last week through Canadian firm Tucows Domains.

While the website was registered in Canada, there is no information available about the person who is running the website.

In an email, an unnamed spokesperson for the Wellington occupation said the "Toronto registration is a red herring".

"It is simply the registrar's details which are showing to protect the personal information of the domain holder given the harassment that is inevitable in situations like this."

They confirmed the website had received just over \$30,000 in donations, and that "it's obvious that the amounts are modest donations from Kiwis".

Disinformation researcher Byron C. Clark said it is "not totally surprising" New Zealand's protest website is registered in Canada, home of the "Freedom Convoy" movement.

But he said it is not clear whether there is any link to the Canadian protests.

"Protest is really globalised now, and social movements are globalised now, whether they're progressive movements like Occupy a decade ago, or Black Lives Matter, or Me Too," Clark said. "This movement may be a more politically conservative movement, but it's just as globalised as any of those others."

Early on in the Wellington protest, a number of Canadian flags were flying in an apparent reference to the similar protest in the Canadian capital of Ottawa.

AP reported that Canadian authorities used emergency powers to seize 76 bank accounts connected to protesters. They contained a total of NZ\$3.75 million.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said it is not something being contemplated at the moment by the New Zealand government.

"Ultimately... those decisions would sit with the police," Ardern said. "They'd have both the ability to investigate, and then enforce."

What we've seen at this stage has been more anecdotal than hard evidence around the connection to overseas protest."

Ardern said the Government would take advice before seeking any legislative pathway to ending the occupation.

"We'd want to see the evidence to ensure that any steps or regulatory changes were actually targeted at the identified problem."

At least one of the groups behind the occupation, Voices for Freedom (VFF), has provided travel costs to those who wish to travel to the capital. The anti-lockdown group paid for flights for a 27-year-old woman, her 24-year-old partner, and a friend, 29, to travel from Queenstown to Wellington this week. She spoke to Stuff on the condition of anonymity.

The cost for return flights was around \$500, she said. The group wouldn't join the encampment, but would stay with friends. She was told food would be provided, and that organisers have gathered enough to feed the camp for four months.

The former hospitality worker attended a local VFF meeting some time ago. More recently, she signed up to the group's online database and attended a meeting on the shores of Lake Wakatipu where she expressed a desire to join the protest "I've lost my job and my home, so I'm free to go and stand with these people who have lost the same as me," she said.

Over the weekend, she was contacted by the organiser of the meeting and told funds could be provided from a donor to facilitate her travel. They called me to say they have a fund from people within the group who can't physically be there but want to donate and support someone else to get there. They were like: we are willing to fund you as much as we can.

"Two donors offered me a little bit of help. It's mind-blowing. Everything in my world has just opened for me to go there. People are saying: just go."

Once she booked the flights and provided an invoice, the cash was transferred to her bank account. It didn't come directly from Voices for Freedom, but was donated by the owner of a tourism business. Stuff agreed not to publish the names of the organiser or donor.

The woman said she lost the restaurant job she held for five years over her refusal to be vaccinated. She said her employers were very understanding but had no choice. Because she couldn't pay rent, she said she also lost her home.

"I didn't want to get [the vaccine.] It went against all of my values. I believe in it, I just don't personally want it... and then to be forced out of my job and my home... the losing of my basic rights was very upsetting. I felt shoved out of society, which is what this protest is all about and the reason I'm going."

The trio were also friends with Rory Nairn, a 26-year-old Dunedin plumber, who died in November. An autopsy found Nairn's death was "consistent with vaccine-related myocarditis" and the coroner is now investigating. Myocarditis, or inflammation of the heart muscle, is a rare side effect of Pfizer's Covid-19 vaccine, affecting about three in every 100,000 people vaccinated. Most cases are mild and do not require treatment.

New Plymouth District Council councillor Murray Chong, who is at the occupation, said he had been approached by a "very wealthy person in the far north" wanting to make a sizeable donation amounting in the thousands.

He had not received a parking ticket but had been told that, if he did, he could take it to the information tent at the occupation site and it would be taken care of.

He was aware of many others – some who supported the cause but couldn't get to Wellington – who had donated money, food, or petrol.

Protester Ben Norton was also told he could take parking tickets to the information tent, "and they sort it out for you".

Wellington City Council spokesman Richard MacLean confirmed that, so far, just five of the parking tickets handed out at the site had been paid. The council issued 335 tickets last Tuesday and a further 184 the week before.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/news/local-papers/the-wellingtonian/127838802/new-zealand-occupation-fundraising-website-registered-in-canada>

RNZ: Political leaders should 'get off their high horses' - Jim Bolger

RNZ, Anneke Smith, 22 February 2022

Former prime minister Jim Bolger says political leaders should "get off their high horses" and meet with those occupying Parliament's lawn.

Bolger, who saw many protests during his time on the ninth floor, has weighed in on the anti-Covid-19 vaccine mandate protest to say dialogue is the way forward.

"I think the government, and I'd include all the other parties in government ... just need to get off their high horse and try and identify credible spokespeople as the police clearly have.

"I'm sure the prime minister can talk to the police commissioner and find out who these people are and just listen to their complaints; they may not do anything about the complaints but just listen to them."

The former National Party leader served as prime minister between 1990 and 1997, including during the 79-day land occupation of Pākaitore (Moutoa Gardens) in Whanganui in 1995.

The iwi-led protest ended peacefully with hundreds of protesters vacating the land after a tripartite agreement was signed with local and central governments.

Bolger cannot recall the finer details of the event today but said he was sure politicians met with those occupying Pākaitore to end what was "a very long protest".

He said Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern needed to acknowledge and accept there was a disgruntled group of New Zealanders who wanted to speak with her.

"She should take with her the other leaders of the political party so it's not a partisan issue and just listen to what they have to say; nothing complex, nothing frightening, nobody's threatened; just listen."

The occupation of Parliament has been marred by abuse and threats towards those trying to go about their lives, while signs have called for the executions of politicians, scientists, and journalists.

Bolger said he was not suggesting political leaders engage with fringe or extreme factions of the protest but that there was merit in speaking to those with legitimate concerns.

"The essential principle of democracy is that leaders listen to people and I am not certain that the prime minister has got it right by saying she won't listen to people.

"I don't know what she's fearful of; she doesn't have to obey them but she can listen to them. There are a lot of disgruntled New Zealanders, and they want to have their voice heard."

The occupation has caused major disruption in Wellington; blocking roads, shutting down businesses and forcing the closure of Victoria University's Pipitea campus.

Parliamentarians issued an ultimatum last week; each party signing a statement that said politicians would not speak with protesters until all illegal activity is put to a stop.

Bolger believed this was a mistake as speaking with protesters would have removed a major criticism held by the illegal encampment that no one was listening to their concerns.

"The joint letter was a mistake. It demanded complete capitulation by those who felt they needed to be heard. That wasn't going to happen. So they should just park as a mistake; we all make mistakes; they make mistakes. That's not the issue.

"What they mustn't do is just stand on their high horse and say, well, everything has to follow our rules. Democracies are actually the other way around. Those who are elected have to follow the dictates of those who elect them."

Ardern's position on meeting with protesters has not wavered since the occupation at Parliament began, and yesterday, she reiterated she would not be making decisions based on those out front.

"We all want to go back to the way life was, and we will, I suspect sooner than you think. But when that happens it will be because easing restrictions won't compromise the life of thousands of people - not because you demand it."

Bolger acknowledged the challenges posed by modern technology and said he would not be surprised if some protesters were being bankrolled by people in America's far-right.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/political/462025/political-leaders-should-get-off-their-high-horses-jim-bolger>

Fox News: Tucker Carlson: What's happening to truckers in Canada reveals the future of the United States

The situation in Canada is what the collapse of democracy looks like

Fox News, Tucker Carlson, February 21 2022

Tucker: This is what the collapse of democracy looks like

Fox News host shreds light on Canada's crackdown of the Freedom Convoy protesters on 'Tucker Carlson Tonight.'

You have to feel a little bad for the many heads of western democracies. For them, the end of the coronavirus pandemic is really the worst thing they can imagine.

Put yourself in their position. For two years you've wielded unprecedented power over your country. You've told citizens where and when they can work and shop and worship and go outside. You've controlled what they wear. You've decided how their children will be educated and what drugs they must put into their bodies. For a person with no useful skills and limited job prospects in the real economy, and that describes all of them, it's been an extraordinary experience: No democratic leader in history has ever been this powerful, as powerful as you are right now. You're like a god. Each morning, you wake up and survey your creation, and you revel in your omnipotence. You can hardly believe how far you've come. The last thing you want is for all of it to end.

But of course, it is ending. The virus that gave you these powers is in retreat. It's no longer a public health emergency. The vaccine that you promised would be a panacea, didn't work in the ways you pledged they would. They didn't stop infection or transmission. Now you've done your best to hide that fact, but everybody knows it. So for you, the jig is up. The ball is over. It's almost midnight. Just a few hours from now, you will once again be merely a scullery maid. You'll be taking orders from your citizens rather than giving them and the thought of that sends you into a panic.

What do you do next? How do you make this moment last forever? There's only one way. You must find a new emergency that justifies making your powers permanent. If you're going to remain god, you're going to need the devil to fight. So, if you're wondering why so many western leaders suddenly are vilifying their own populations, people they were supposed to represent, this is why. Find an enemy, create a crisis, stay in power forever. It's the oldest recipe for tyranny that there is. If we don't recognize it in our own age, it's only because nothing like this was supposed to happen in a democracy, but it is happening, most clearly in Canada.

Last week, Justin Trudeau used a peaceful trucker strike to declare martial law. Trudeau seized control of the police. He shut down opposition media coverage. He declared himself the final arbiter of all financial transactions in the nation of Canada. These are dictatorial powers, but they were necessary, Trudeau explained, because this was an emergency. White supremacist and other sedition-minded forces, backed by foreign saboteurs (sound familiar?) threatened the very existence of Canada. The truckers were effectively an invading army.

Well, over the weekend, Trudeau defeated that army. They were unarmed. He is not. Trudeau cleared the trucker strike by force. Yet his emergency powers remain. Today, Justin Trudeau explained that he will remain in full control of Canada indefinitely. And that's essential, he said, to keep Canada safe, but the video tells a very different story. In fact, it's Trudeau's crackdown on human rights that has put Canadians in danger. Trudeau's forces told one woman she's no longer allowed to record what happens in her own city.

WOMAN: I just want to get a coffee, ok?

POLICE: Why is the camera in my face right now? ...Right now you are in the red zone.

WOMAN: I'm scared, I want to go for a coffee down there.

POLICE: Where are you from?

WOMAN: Alberta.

POLICE: We've been patrolling all day, if we see you again it will be different.

OTHER POLICE OFFICER (GRABBING A HOLD OF THE CAMERA): Leave. Take your camera and get out of here.

WOMAN: I'm walking away.

OTHER POLICE OFFICER: Do you understand that?

WOMAN: I'm walking away...

OTHER POLICE OFFICER: Walk away. Your phone doesn't need to be in our faces when you're walking away.

WOMAN: I'm walking away.

"I just want a cup of coffee."

"Get out of here."

Multiply what you just saw by an entire country, and that's Canada tonight. There's no longer any pretext that this is about the COVID pandemic. No one in Trudeau's government is trying to protect Canadians from anything much less a virus. This is political repression.

If you doubt that, consider what happened to a place called the Ionic Cafe. That's a coffee shop in downtown Ottawa. On Sunday, riot police tried to break into the cafe and shut it down. Why? Because the proprietors had dared to serve coffee to the truckers during the protest. Under Justin Trudeau, that is now a crime. A man called Enrico, who works at the cafe, said he saw Trudeau's forces mistreat a civilian on the sidewalk, possibly like the mistreatment you just saw. When he told them to back off, "Hey, this is Canada," they turned on him.

MAN FILMING: OK, share this out, you guys, get it out everywhere now. Get it out. They're saying they're going to break the window. They already walked around back, you guys. Here's your tax service. Here's your taxes at play, everyone. Welcome to absolute tyranny.

So that kind of thing is happening all over the capital city of Canada. The virus is in retreat, but there's a new crisis and that crisis is disobedience. Last week we showed you the footage of Trudeau's forces trampling a woman with horses. Now, internal texts show the officers who rode those horses celebrated what they did.

"Just watch that horse video. That is awesome," said one officer.

Awesome. An elderly woman being trampled by a horse. The Canadian government has confirmed that those texts are real but none of the supposedly progressive politicians in Canada care in the least. No one on the Canadian left or the American left, for that matter, has condemned any of this or any other grotesque violation of human rights in Canada. State media aren't even reporting that it's happening.

But it is happening. Over the weekend, the show obtained footage of a particularly brutal beating in Ottawa during the crackdown. When you watch it, you can see a man being kneed repeatedly by Trudeau's men.

DAVID PAISLEY: I can hear noises of people getting shoved around outside, being arrested, a man being kneed there. That's terrible.

Kneeing him, again and again, and again. He wasn't resisting. And the man who shot that footage was called David Paisley. He runs a website called shedmedia.ca. Police have arrested Paisley and seized the camera equipment he used to shoot that— \$5,000 worth. Now we thought that video was remarkable, so we alerted several Canadian media outlets over the weekend, including CBC and CTV to this footage. We gave them David Paisley's contact information, news organization to news organization. But none of them reported on it. So we looked into it ourselves.

Several protesters who were there said that a trucker in an orange jacket called Csaba Vizi was attacked by police officers during the crackdown. We reached Csaba Vizi and he confirmed it and provided footage. It shows him exiting his cab calmly, kneeling down in front of his truck and clasping his hands behind his head.

CSABA VIZI, TRUCKER: I'm proud you're here

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: (speaks French)

CSABA VIZI, TRUCKER: I don't speak French.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: It's very hard, but, you don't lose.

CSABA VIZI, TRUCKER: No, I am not.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Second battle.

CSABA VIZI, TRUCKER: As soon as they let me out, I'll be back. ... I'm going down. I'm going down by knee, hands behind my back. I am self-ready... I'm peacefully protesting.

So the man surrenders, on camera, and then he's kneed repeatedly into submission. Now we'd love to have more footage, but it turns out none of Justin Trudeau's men was wearing a body camera at the time. That's pretty weird. No one in Canadian state media cares to follow up on that story, and so they're not. They don't care, either.

The brutality is just one element of this crackdown. On Saturday, Ottawa's new police chief promised to hunt down the regime's enemies no matter where they are in coming months and ruin them financially.

OTTAWA POLICE CHIEF: So, I will stand here today again and say this demonstration is over. Go home. If you don't go home, we will remove you from the streets. ... If you are involved in this protest, we will actively look to identify you and follow up with financial sanctions and criminal charges. Absolutely.

If you were involved in a protest, you'll be sanctioned and charged. What does that mean exactly? Well, last night, Justin Trudeau's government announced that it's also going after anyone who "directly or indirectly participated in the protests." According to Mark Strahl, who is a member of Canada's parliament, the dragnet has ensnared one of his constituents. It's a woman called Briane. Her crime? Donating \$50 to the truckers. In response "her bank account has now been frozen." Briane is a single

mom from Chilliwack, working a minimum wage job. She now has no money at all. So under Trudeau's new order, she won't simply lose access to her bank account. She will also lose access to credit unions, co-ops, trusts and loan providers.

This is what the collapse of democracy looks like. It's not simply beating people in the streets. It's making it impossible for them to live because you steal all their money. You award yourself the power to control every dollar in your country. Where's that power come from? Well, it's a self-appointed power, that Justin Trudeau now has, and you prevent anyone from speaking out against you. So Trudeau is not just targeting people who parked their trucks in Ottawa, he's crushing anyone who supports them. He's going after their employers. Over the weekend, the owner of a trucking company in Ontario received this threatening call from Trudeau's authorities.

CALLER: Well, my job is to, um, to phone the registered owner of the trucks to ask them if they're still in Ottawa and if they are still in Ottawa, I wish to tell the registered owner that now they can be subject to the new measures under the Emergency Measures Act, so they can like seize assets and freeze bank accounts and all that kind of stuff.

So, Trudeau's government is promising to seize company assets and zero up bank accounts because one company truck parked on the street in Ottawa. It's not simply an overreaction, a grotesque overreaction to a peaceful protest. It's a wild and unprecedented expansion of powers that is permanent, and that make democracy impossible. Canada's finance minister explained that Trudeau is not going to give up this power. Ever.

CANADIAN FINANCE MINISTER: We will be putting forward measures to put those tools permanently in place. The authorities of FINTRAC, I believe, do need to be expanded to cover crowdsourcing platforms and payment platform and their payment providers. So that's... something that we need to do and we will do and that needs to be in place permanently.

You'll notice that some of the harshest authoritarians, not simply in Canada, but across the West, speak in light, lilting voices going up on the last syllable. They don't sound like Mussolini, but they've awarded themselves greater powers. By the way, this all seems to have happened overnight in Canada, but that's simply because most Americans don't pay attention.

A year ago, Canada's government began debating something called C-36. That bill would allow activists to head to court and accuse someone of "contemplating hate speech"—not even saying something unauthorized, just thinking about saying it. So, what is hate speech exactly and what does it look like to contemplate it? Well, back around 2020, a man living in British Columbia wrote to complain to a Canadian government official called Bob Rae. The man wrote that "you and your government have blood on your hands for not quarantining Canada's borders before we'd imported COVID from around the world."

Now you can agree with that or disagree with it, but it's hardly a wild opinion and of course, it will always be permitted in an actual democracy, but the Canadian official's response to Bob Rae's response "Worthy of a block. Hate speech."

Criticized me, the person in power, and now it's hate speech. Now, contemplating saying something like that is itself a crime. Canadian government officials like Bob Rae can send people who criticize them to jail. Trudeau's government has moved to reintroduce Bill C-36 "as quickly as possible."

Now, the Biden administration, you should know and not forget, has encouraged all of this. "Vladimir Putin is the tyrant," they tell us, "not Justin Trudeau." At this point it's pretty clear that if you want to know the future they are planning for us in the United States, look north to Canada.

This article is adapted from Tucker Carlson's opening monologue on the February 21, 2022 edition of "Tucker Carlson Tonight."

<https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/tucker-carlson-truckers-canada-future-united-states>

Blockworks: Government Crypto Powers in Spotlight After Canadian Trucker Protest Is Disbanded

Industry participants are divided when it comes to lawmakers' ability to freeze bitcoin wallets

Blockworks, Michael Bodley, February 21, 2022

Canadian truckers protesting Covid vaccine mandates raised more than \$1 million in bitcoin

The bitcoin fundraiser came after the collective was banned from GoFundMe and another crowdfunding platform

A loose collective of Canadian truckers protesting Covid vaccine mandates are in the crosshairs of a controversy they hadn't bargained for: whether the government can cut off their access to bitcoin.

The truckers, dubbed The Freedom Convoy 2022, were first banned from GoFundMe as the Canadian government began to crack down on their fundraising efforts. Then, competitor GiveSendGo gave them the boot. Protestors have since raised more than \$1 million via bitcoin-fundraising platform Tally.

Although Canadian police broke up the protest in Ottawa over the weekend and a key US-Canada trade route that had been blocked by protestors reopened, questions remain over the security of the crypto funds dissidents raised.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau invoked emergency rules last week freezing truckers' bank accounts — and attempted to do the same with their bitcoin wallets. However, whether the government can keep the protesters away from bitcoin is another question entirely.

Protestors also set up a number of smaller wallets on Ethereum, Cardano, Ethereum Classic and Litecoin as they snarled key international thoroughfares with semi-trucks and defied repeated police orders to disperse.

Although the government has the power to block crypto exchanges operating under KYC (know your customer) requirements, nothing is stopping the dissidents from creating a whack-a-mole series of crypto wallets and washing — or laundering — bitcoin via services such as CoinJoin.

Even if the truckers take those precautions, though, the government could still take action later. Chen Arad, co-founder of crypto trading surveillance platform Solidus Labs, told Blockworks opening new wallets would be "doomed to fail," likely leading to future indictments.

"It's immutable," Arad said of the blockchain. "It's always there. It's very hard to hide if you've done something on a public blockchain."

Others say Trudeau's undertaking may cause some immediate headaches for the truckers but cast doubt on the government's ability to thwart the cashing out of bitcoin.

Cory Klippsten, CEO of exchange Swan Bitcoin, said the situation is an opportunity for savvy bitcoiners to help the truckers "sidestep" the bid to "essentially freeze off-ramps."

It was a matter of time before lawmakers tried to seize bitcoin, Klippsten said, a concern that has been overlooked as the cryptocurrency has, relatively unchecked, exploded in adoption in recent years.

"We've been kind of lazy, because, recently, no one was cracking down, and in the developing world there was no infrastructure to try to stop it, so basically there was this null set of circumstances where a capable government with the ability to overreach could try to do that," Klippsten said.

If the protesting truckers have already set up a wallet on a KYC exchange, it may be too late for them to shield its contents from the authorities. Steve Halborn, co-founder of crypto cybersecurity company Halborn, said the safer route would be to set up a wallet via Bitcoin core technology or tap another source, such as Trezor, to set up a mnemonic phrase that's not connected to an exchange.

Another option: using the Lightning Network, a layer-2 application built on top of the Bitcoin blockchain that enables faster transactions, to transfer bitcoin and not settle the transaction on the chain itself.

"There's the whole KYC of having a wallet generated within an exchange, so Coinbase and Kraken and all of the ones that comply with government legislation and regulation — they can certainly freeze funds held there," Halborn said.

Indeed, Kraken CEO Jesse Powell tweeted Feb. 17 that the police freezing cryptocurrency on the exchange "100%" has already happened and will happen in the future.

"We will be forced to comply," Powell wrote. "If you're worried about it, don't keep your funds with any centralized/regulated custodian. We cannot protect you."

Steve Gormley, CEO of crypto ATM provider CoinMover, cast doubt on the government's know-how to pull off a seizure, saying the digital assets understanding of lawmakers is still in its infancy.

"This is not something the government is going to get its arms around, and frankly, there's too much big money involved," Gormley said.

There is precedent — not least in the US government's record recovery of \$3.5 billion of stolen bitcoin in recent weeks. Granted, the couple accused of stealing it had stored their seed phrase on the cloud.

"What they tried to do is execute thousands of different transactions to launder the money," Arad said. "It didn't help. The exact opposite happened, actually. The fact that it was on the blockchain helped law enforcement recover it in a far more effective way than ever before."

Regulation — which heightens the powers of law enforcement in crypto — is a necessary prerequisite for mass adoption, according to Maksim Hramadtsou, founder at crypto trading firm GoodCrypto.App.

“Of course, if you are a true crypto believer that believes that crypto shouldn’t be under government control and whatnot, then that’s bad,” Hramadtsou said. “But the same people that want bitcoin to be decentralized and not controllable by anybody — they also want mass crypto adoption.”

In the meantime, before mass adoption happens, lawmakers may have an easier time cracking down on blockchain-based crime as they gain expertise in the nascent technology.

“What’s also been interesting in how regulators approach this is it’s very probable that it would be easier for them to get to someone who did something wrong now than five years ago when it was a suitcase full of dollars,” Arad said.

Either way, investigators are unlikely to let up their efforts before mastering policing of both crypto and fiat currencies.

“Apparently, governments are trying to give an impression that they can control it, and they can control it in the way they control the onramps and offramps of anything that touches the real world,” Hramadtsou said.

<https://blockworks.co/government-crypto-powers-in-spotlight-after-canadian-trucker-protest-is-disbanded/>

The Guardian: Canada extends emergency powers after trucker blockades ended

Prime minister Justin Trudeau says situation ‘still fragile’ after biggest police operation in nation’s history

The Guardian (UK Edition), 22 Feb 2022

Canadian lawmakers have voted to extend the emergency powers that police can invoke to quell any potential restart of blockades by those opposed to Covid-19 restrictions.

Lawmakers in Canada’s House of Commons voted 185 to 151 to affirm the powers.

The prime minister, Justin Trudeau, said earlier that the powers were still needed despite police ending the occupation of the nation’s capital by truckers over the weekend.

Bill Blair, the country’s emergency preparedness minister, said the protesters were going for the “lifeblood of this nation, which is trade with the United States”.

Trudeau noted there were some truckers just outside Ottawa who might be planning further blockades or occupations. His public safety minister said there was an attempt to block a border crossing in British Columbia over the weekend.

The Emergencies Act allows authorities to declare certain areas as no-go zones. It also allows police to freeze truckers’ personal and corporate bank accounts and compel tow truck companies to haul away vehicles.

The trucker protest grew until it closed a handful of Canada-US border posts and shut down key parts of the capital for more than three weeks. But all border blockades have now ended and the streets around the Canadian parliament are quiet.

Ottawa protesters who vowed never to give up are largely gone, chased away by police in riot gear in what was the biggest police operation in the nation's history.

"The situation is still fragile, the state of emergency is still there," Trudeau said before the vote.

The opposition New Democratic Party supported it, ensuring Trudeau had enough votes. The NDP's leader, Jagmeet Singh, said there are protesters waiting in the areas surrounding Ottawa and in the capital itself.

"They need to be cleared out," said Singh, who also noted there have been convoys that have been intercepted.

"This is an attack on our democracy. This is a group of folks who are very clearly connected to the extreme right wing, The organisers clearly have a goal in mind to undermine democracy. That's something we can't allow to continue."

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police said those who had their bank accounts frozen were "influencers in the illegal protest in Ottawa, and owners and/or drivers of vehicles who did not want to leave the area".

Finance minister Chrystia Freeland said earlier anyone affected has an easy way to have their accounts unfrozen: "Stop being a part of the blockade," she said.

The public safety minister, Marco Mendicino, said allowing police to designate Ottawa's downtown area a no-go zone has been particularly effective. About 100 police checkpoints remain. "We saw calm, peace and quiet," Mendicino said.

"While we always will defend people's right to opinion, expression and assembly there are limits to rights when they begin to impact so severely on the rights of others and we saw that here in Ottawa," said Blair.

The protests, which were first aimed at a Covid-19 vaccine mandate for cross-border truckers but also encompassed fury over the range of restrictions, reflected the spread of disinformation in Canada and simmering populist and right-wing anger.

The self-styled Freedom Convoy shook Canada's reputation for civility, inspired convoys in France, New Zealand and the Netherlands, and interrupted trade, causing economic damage on both sides of the border. Hundreds of trucks eventually occupied the streets around parliament, a display that was part protest and part carnival.

For almost a week the busiest US-Canada border crossing, the Ambassador Bridge between Windsor, Ontario, and Detroit, was blocked. The crossing sees more than 25% of the trade between the two countries.

Authorities moved to reopen the border posts, but police in Ottawa did little but issue warnings until Friday, even as hundreds and sometimes thousands of protesters clogged the streets of the city and besieged Parliament Hill.

On Friday, authorities launched the largest police operation in Canadian history, arresting a string of Ottawa protesters and increasing that pressure on Saturday until the streets in front of parliament were clear. Eventually, police arrested at least 191 people and towed away 79 vehicles. Many protesters retreated as the pressure increased.

Trudeau said people in Ottawa were harassed for weeks and said billions of dollars in trade were stalled by the border blockades, putting people's jobs at risk.

The protests have been cheered on in the US. by Fox News personalities and conservatives including the former president Donald Trump. Millions of dollars in donations have flowed across the border to the protesters.

"A flood of misinformation and disinformation washed over Canada, including from foreign sources," Trudeau said.

"After these illegal blockades and occupations received disturbing amounts of foreign funding to destabilise Canada's democracy it became clear that local and provincial authorities needed more tools to restore order."

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/22/canada-extends-emergency-powers-after-trucker-blockades-ended>

The Guardian: As New Zealand police face criticism over parliament protests, Canada could provide lessons

The Guardian (UK Edition), Dominic O'Sullivan, 21 Feb 2022

Ottawa police have abandoned their policy of de-escalation against anti-Covid mandate demonstrators.

Today's action to cordon off the occupation of parliament's grounds and prevent it growing might go some way to restoring public confidence in the police, which has appeared to be eroding since the protests began a fortnight ago.

So far, police have pursued a de-escalation strategy, but there have been calls for firmer action. The whole event has raised important questions about the relationship between the police and government, and about police independence and accountability.

With local businesses unable to trade, and the neighbouring university closing its campus for eight weeks, the political consequences are potentially serious.

From the government's perspective, there is a direct relationship between its own public support and public confidence in the police. The political and legal impasse between the rightful independence of the police and public accountability is not a simple issue to resolve.

The relationship between the government and the police has come a long way since government minister John Bryce – armed and on horseback – led the police invasion of Parihaka in 1881. Bryce decided who would be arrested and personally ordered the destruction of property.

Supporting the political objectives of the government of the day was a function of the police. But New Zealand was not a developed liberal democracy 140 years ago.

By 2018, that relationship had evolved enough for the solicitor general to advise the prime minister that “constabulary independence [had become] a core constitutional principle in New Zealand”.

The solicitor general explained the constitutional subtleties of the Policing Act thus:

The police are an instrument of the crown [...] but in the two principal roles of detecting and preventing crime and keeping the Queen’s peace they act independently of the crown and serve only the law.

This is reinforced in the oath police officers swear to perform their duties “without favour or affection, malice or ill will”.

Constabulary independence means governments can’t control the police for political advantage. At the same time, police accountability to the public is as important as for any department of state. Independence should not mean the police can do whatever they like.

However, the lines of accountability are complex. Constabulary independence means the ordinary process of accountability to parliament through the relevant minister, and through parliament to the people, does not fully apply to the police.

The police commissioner is accountable to the minister for “carrying out the functions and duties of the police”, but explicitly not for “the enforcement of the law” and “the investigation and prosecution of offences”.

As well as “keeping the peace”, “maintaining public safety”, “law enforcement”, “crime prevention” and “national security”, the Policing Act requires “community support and reassurance”.

This might help explain why, for security and tactical reasons, the police won’t fully explain their tolerance of the occupation, beyond the police commissioner saying the public would not accept the inevitable violence and injury a harder line would entail.

Despite clear public concern, the police are not required to give further explanation of why they haven’t prosecuted people for intimidation and harassment, for threatening MPs, public servants and journalists, or for failing to remove illegally parked vehicles.

The situation in Canada may be instructive. There, the police have seemingly abandoned a de-escalation strategy that had lasted three weeks, with the protest in Ottawa cleared in the past few days.

As in New Zealand, public tolerance was low. Rejecting a claim that the repeated sounding of 105-decibel truck horns was “part of the democratic process”, a Canadian judge said: “Tooting a horn is not an expression of any great thought.”

In both countries, the protests are being viewed less as expressions of political thought than as simple acts of public nuisance. The difference lies in the Canadian federal government invoking special powers under its Emergencies Act.

The first time it has been invoked since it was passed in 1988, the law allows the government to use “special temporary measures that may not be appropriate in normal times” to respond to “threats to the security of Canada”.

Banks can freeze accounts being used to support the protest. Private citizens and businesses may be compelled to provide essential services to assist the state – tow trucks, for example.

Such significant constraints on freedom can be justified only if they are proportionate to the emergency. But on Friday, the Canadian parliament was prevented from scrutinising the decision to declare an emergency because protesters had prevented access to the debating chambers.

Ironically, the debate began on Saturday when police cleared the obstruction (without needing emergency powers) – suggesting “freedom” is a wider concept than the one protesters claimed they were defending.

The ability of people to go to work, to study, shop, drive on a public road – and (as in Ottawa) the ability of parliament to function – are democratic freedoms the protesters are curtailing.

Whether Wellington goes the way of Ottawa remains to be seen, but the New Zealand police commissioner says a state of emergency is among the “reasonable options” being considered to stop more protesters entering parliament grounds.

For now, the political question is what happens if the evolution from protest to public nuisance to crisis of confidence in the police continues.

Given the constraints of constabulary independence, and the democratic need for accountability, what political responses are available to the government to ensure any crisis of confidence in the police does not become a crisis of confidence in the government itself?

For both police and government, there is much at stake in the de-escalation strategy.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/commentisfree/2022/feb/21/as-new-zealand-police-face-criticism-over-parliament-protests-canada-could-provide-lessons>

France 24 : "Convoi de la liberté" : la police canadienne a repris le contrôle du centre d'Ottawa

FRANCE 24, 20 février 2022

Au moins 190 personnes ont été arrêtées et près de 80 véhicules remorqués, depuis vendredi, pour dégager le centre d'Ottawa, théâtre depuis 24 jours d'une mobilisation contre les restrictions sanitaires au Canada.

La mobilisation inédite contre la politique sanitaire du gouvernement canadien, appelée "Convoi de la liberté", aura paralysé durant 24 jours le centre d'Ottawa (Ontario). La police a repris, dimanche 20 février, le contrôle de la ville. Les autorités ont arrêté au moins 190 manifestants et remorqué près de 80 véhicules.

Depuis la fin du mois de janvier, des centaines de camionneurs campaient devant le siège du Parlement pour s'opposer à l'obligation de se faire vacciner contre le Covid-19 pour franchir la frontière franco-canadienne.

Aspergeant les protestataires de spray au poivre, détruisant les abris de fortune dans lesquels certains s'étaient retranchés, la police a haussé le ton au début du week-end, estimant qu'il était temps pour les manifestants de partir. Après avoir délogé la majorité d'entre eux, une clôture a été installée autour du Parlement.

Seule une poignée de manifestants étaient encore présents dans les rues du centre dimanche. Refusant de s'avouer vaincus, nombre d'entre eux ont assuré qu'ils continueraient à faire pression pour une levée totale des restrictions anti-Covid dans le pays, qui sont parmi les plus strictes au monde. Certaines d'entre elles ont été assouplies ces derniers jours.

Un mouvement qui prolifère

L'évolution de la situation a réjoui, dimanche, certains habitants d'Ottawa qui ont recommencé à s'aventurer dans les rues du centre. "Ces dernières semaines ont été un enfer absolu", souffle auprès de l'AFP Dave Chapin au sujet des manifestants. "Je suis très heureux de retrouver ma ville", abonde à son tour Jeff Lindley, content que le "calme" soit enfin revenu.

S'il semble être revenu à Ottawa, ce mouvement de contestation historique pourrait toutefois avoir des effets durables sur la politique du Canada. Et il a inspiré d'autres manifestants au-delà des frontières du pays, notamment en France et en Nouvelle-Zélande.

La police de la capitale américaine Washington a également dit se préparer à l'arrivée d'un convoi de camionneurs au moment de la traditionnelle adresse à la nation de Joe Biden au Congrès américain, prévue le 1er mars. En prévision, un grillage pourrait être installé autour du Capitole.

<https://www.france24.com/fr/am%C3%A9riques/20220220-convoi-de-la-libert%C3%A9-la-police-canadienne-a-quasiment-repris-le-contr%C3%B4le-du-centre-d-ottawa>

The Conversation: Anti-vax protest or insurrection? Making sense of the 'freedom convoy' protest

The Conversation, David Tindall, February 21, 2022

David Tindall is Professor of Sociology, University of British Columbia

The so-called "freedom convoy" protests over the last month saw an unprecedented reaction by all levels of government and ultimately led to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau invoking the Emergencies Act. The act shut off funding to protesters, conscripted private tow trucks to haul away rigs (tilting the balance of resources) and provided additional policing resources.

While many see what happened in Ottawa as unique, it's also similar in some ways to what's occurred in the past. The convoy might be considered a social movement protest or a form of "contentious politics," which covers protest and related phenomena, including insurrections.

Contentious politics seems a particularly apt description because the "freedom" protest has as much to do with opposing Trudeau's Liberal government as it does with opposing vaccine mandates — which provided a "political opportunity" for the protest.

Messaging vs. disruption

One motivation for protests is to capture the media's attention and communicate to the public. Other types of tactics, like blockades, are intended to cause disruption to put pressure on governments and other parties to act. In Canada, protesting to get a message across is a democratic right.

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Views about the legitimacy of disruption are mixed. Over the last few years, Vancouver protesters opposed to the TransMountain Pipeline and those against logging in Fairy Creek on Vancouver Island engaged in both types of tactics. But those disruptive tactics were mostly narrowly targeted against the companies involved in building the pipeline and on the site of the logging operations.

By contrast, the truckers' protest cast a much wider net — it disrupted the entire city of Ottawa. Public opinion on these various issues and disruptions consequently vary.

Not the first city shutdown

As York University sociologist Lesley Wood has pointed out, trucker border blockades have occurred before. It's also not the first time a city has been shut down due to mass protest — this occurred during anti-globalization protests, including in Seattle in 1999 and Toronto in 2010. Nevertheless, the use of big trucks to disrupt normal city life is new, and constitutes what academics call a "tactical innovation."

Protest size is often seen as an indicator of its legitimacy and potential to influence outcomes. Observers have been impressed with the size of the truckers' protest. This was shaped by the length of the convoy of trucks, which does not necessarily translate into large crowds of individuals.

The protest was actually not nearly as large as some other events in Canada. Police estimated that protest crowds in Ottawa were between 5,000 and 18,000. This crowd was dwarfed by climate marches in Montréal (approximately 500,000) and Vancouver (estimated at 120,000) in September 2019.

Different treatment for other protesters

Some wonder why police in Ottawa took so long to take action against the protesters and asked why other protests and groups seem to get treated differently by police.

Indigenous groups are often subject to more more military-style policing than other protesters, and it should be noted one of the only few times in the past 100 years that the military has been used to suppress a protest was against the Mohawks during the Oka crisis in 1990. By contrast, videos circulated in the media showed RCMP officers hugging and shaking hands with protesters at the border in Alberta.

Researchers have found that police use discretion in how they repress protesters. In Canada, it's customary to give protesters time and space initially to fulfil their right to protest and deliver a message. Police are more likely to take action after court injunctions are issued and if there are threats of violence or property damage (as witnessed at the border protest at Coutts, Alta).

In Ottawa, most of the protest leaders were arrested, as were about 170 of their followers. Within two days of enhanced police action, the protesters dispersed and dozens of their trucks were towed and impounded.

What's next for anti-vax protests?

The “freedom convoy” in Ottawa may be over, but it is impossible to be certain about the future of anti-vaccine mandate movements.

According to polls and to patterns of vaccination across the country, the vast majority of Canadians do not support the truckers’ protest or their positions, and two-thirds of Canadian support the use of the Emergencies Act.

This means the federal government has limited pressure on it to make concessions. It’s likely many COVID-19 measures will soon be reduced anyway in response to falling hospitalization rates — several provinces have already made such announcements. It seems likely that the truckers will declare victory and claim the changes were made as a result of their protest.

The contentious politics on display in the truckers’ protest are intertwined with a shift toward more extreme political views among some segments of the population, a trend that’s spread from south of the border. Because the size of this faction of extremists isn’t as large as in the U.S., the political dynamics in Canada are different.

The protest has already played a role in costing both the federal Opposition leader and the Ottawa chief of police their jobs, and there will likely be further political and social repercussions in the coming weeks and months.

One potential outcome — ironic, considering many on the left were critical of the government’s hesitancy to crack down on the truckers’ protest — is that future right-wing governments may be more likely to use the Emergencies Act to crack down on progressive protesters like those involved in climate and anti-colonialism protests.

<https://theconversation.com/anti-vax-protest-or-insurrection-making-sense-of-the-freedom-convoy-protest-176524>
